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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AID-00	ACQ-01	CEA-01	CTME-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00
	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	L-01	ADS-00
	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00	T-00	FMP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/019W			

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R 161056Z NOV 98
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2274
INFO CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
USIA WASHDC 1946
USDOC WASHDC 3251
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
USINT HAVANA

PAGES MISSING

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 CARACAS 003429

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/28/08
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, ECON, EFIN, VE
SUBJECT: POLLING THE POLLSTERS: [REDACTED] (REPORT 8 OF 9)

B1

REF: (A) CARACAS 03287, (B) CARACAS 03320, (C) CARACAS 03332, (D)
EMOTION OR INTIMIDATION OF THE ELECTORATE.

5. (U) THE BAD THINGS ABOUT [REDACTED] METHODOLOGY:

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-- USES QUOTAS AT THE RESPONDENT SELECTION STAGE, REDUCING THE
RELIABILITY OF THEIR RESULTS.

-- NOT INTERVIEWING IN THE RURAL AREAS OR SMALL TOWNS, MAKING AN
ELECTION PREDICTION BASED ON HIS RESULTS MORE PROBLEMATIC.

-- ODD FINDINGS, SUCH AS CHAVEZ HAVING MORE STRENGTH AMONG THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, L. HEDGBETH, n/a

DAS, A/GIS

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON

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CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4

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DECLASSIFY AFTER: 15 NOV 2023

DATE/CASE ID: 21 JUL 2008 200503654

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MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASSES THAN AMONG THE POOR (49 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN A/B/C CLASSES, VERSUS 39 PERCENT IN THE E CLASS.) FINDINGS SUCH AS THESE TEND TO RAISE SOME DOUBTS ABOUT HIS RESULTS.

-- DOES NOT HAVE A PROFESSIONAL, FULL-TIME FIELD FORCE, LIKELY REDUCING THE CONSISTENCY AND RELIABILITY OF HIS FINDINGS.

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7. (U) [REDACTED] SEES THE ELECTORATE DIVIDED 75 PERCENT FOR CHANGE, 25 PERCENT FOR THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES. HOWEVER, HE FOUND THE POPULATION FAIRLY HOMOGENOUS ON THE MAJOR ISSUES FACING THE COUNTRY. IN HIS POLLS, CRIME AND INSECURITY ARE SEEN AS MORE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS THAN INFLATION, THE COST OF LIVING, OR UNEMPLOYMENT. CHAVEZ IS STILL RUNNING HIGH IN THE POLLS, BUT HE HAS REACHED HIS LIMIT. HIS SEPTEMBER POLL HAS CHAVEZ AHEAD OF SALAS BY 21 POINTS, ALTHOUGH HE SAID THAT HIS OCTOBER POLL WILL SHOW THE TWO MUCH CLOSER (38-40 FOR CHAVEZ AND 30-32 FOR SALAS.) INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, CHAVEZ HAS MORE PEOPLE SAYING THEY HAVE A FAVORABLE OPINION OF HIM THAN SALAS (57 TO 53.) HOWEVER, CHAVEZ HAS THE HIGHER REJECTION RATE (WOULD NEVER VOTE FOR) 27 PERCENT VERSUS ONLY 3 PERCENT FOR SALAS. CHAVEZ IS THE EXPECTED WINNER AMONG THE MAJORITY OF THE RESPONDENTS. ALSO, CHAVEZ HAS AN ADVANTAGE AMONG THE MOST LIKELY VOTERS. CHAVEZ'S LEAD JUMPS TO 52 TO 25 AMONG THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE SURE TO VOTE. IF CHAVEZ WINS THE ELECTION, A MAJORITY EXPECT HIM TO DISSOLVE CONGRESS, REDISTRIBUTE WEALTH, AND HELP THE POOR. THEY DO NOT EXPECT VIOLENCE OR A COUP.

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8. (U) IN THE END, HE THINKS SALAS WILL WIN. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] AD WILL STICK WITH ALFARO, BUT AD RANK AND FILE MIGHT VOTE FOR SALAS JUST TO PREVENT A CHAVEZ VICTORY. [REDACTED] NO MATTER WHAT, IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO KEEP ALFARO IN THE CAMPAIGN BECAUSE MANY OF HIS VOTES

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MIGHT GO TO CHAVEZ, NOT SALAS. HE SAYS THAT THE AD LEADERSHIP IS
DIVIDED ON SALAS. SOME ARE AFRAID OF A SALAS WIN BECAUSE THEY
THINK SALAS WILL WRECK THE AD PARTY NATIONALLY, AS HE DID IN
CARABOBO. OTHERS THINK THAT A CHAVEZ VICTORY WOULD BE GOOD FOR AD
BECAUSE HE WILL RUN THE COUNTRY INTO THE GROUND, CAUSING THE PEOPLE
TO TURN BACK TO AD FOR RESCUE. STILL OTHERS [REDACTED] THINK
THAT CHAVEZ HAS TO BE STOPPED. IF SALAS IS THE ONLY WAY TO STOP
CHAVEZ, THEN SALAS IT IS. THIS GROUP FEELS THAT SALAS WOULD HAVE
TO WORK WITH AD TO REFORM THE COUNTRY IF HE WINS THE PRESIDENCY.
AD WILL BE THE ONLY SIZABLE POLITICAL FORCE, OTHER THAN POLO
PATRIOTICO, AND SALAS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO IGNORE IT. ON CHAVEZ'S
PLATFORM, A MAJORITY OF REGISTERED VOTERS IN HIS POLLS SUPPORT THE
CONSTITUYENTE, BUT HE FEELS THAT MOST DO NOT HAVE A FIRM GRASP OF
WHAT THE CONSTITUYENTE WILL REALLY DO. HIS POLLS ALSO SHOW THAT
MOST PEOPLE WANT THE CONSTITUYENTE INSTITUTED (IF IT IS INSTITUTED)
BY A NATIONAL ACCORD (60 PERCENT), RATHER THAN BY THE PRESIDENT
(ONLY 28 PERCENT.) [REDACTED] DOES NOT THINK CHAVEZ HAS THE
CAPABILITY TO MOBILIZE THE POPULATION FOR VIOLENCE IN THE EVENT
THAT HE LOSSES THE ELECTION.

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9. (U) IN THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS, HE THINKS AD WILL WIN AT LEAST
17 GOVERNORSHIPS. IN CONGRESS, HE THINKS POLO PATRIOTICO WILL TAKE

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R 161056Z NOV 98
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2275
INFO CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
USIA WASHDC 1947
USDOC WASHDC 3252
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LIMA
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AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
USINT HAVANA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 CARACAS 003429

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/28/08

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REF: (A) CARACAS 03287, (B) CARACAS 03320, (C) CARACAS 03332, (D) 30 PERCENT OF THE SEATS, 20-25 PERCENT FOR AD, 10-15 PERCENT COPEI, AND THE REST WILL BE DIVIDED UP AMONG PROYECTO VENEZUELA AND OTHER MINOR PARTIES. (COMMENT: ANOTHER CASE OF A VENEZUELAN POLLSTER MAKING A PROGNOSTICATION ABOUT THE NOVEMBER POLLS WITHOUT HAVING DONE THE REQUISITE STATEWIDE POLLING NECESSARY TO MAKE A PROPER PREDICTION. END COMMENT.) IN AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION IN HIS SEPTEMBER POLL, TWICE AS MANY PEOPLE SAID THEY IDENTIFIED WITH MVR AS COMPARED TO THE NUMBER WHO SAID THEY IDENTIFIED WITH AD. HE SEES POLO PATRIOTICO AS A VERY WEAK COALITION.

10. (U) HE PREDICTS A LARGER THAN NORMAL TURNOUT. HIS SEPTEMBER POLL HAS A TURNOUT OF 43 PERCENT IN NOVEMBER AND 64 PERCENT IN DECEMBER (COMMENT: THIS IS REALLY NOT THAT MUCH HIGHER THAN THE 1993 TURNOUT. END COMMENT.) IN HIS POLLS, MEN IN THE A-B-C ECONOMIC CLASSES; AND THOSE IN SMALLER TOWNS ARE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE. THE UNDECIDED ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE POOR AND WOMEN.

[REDACTED] DOES NOT HAVE MUCH CONFIDENCE IN THE CNE. HE POINTED OUT THAT IN A RECENT CHECK OF VOTER LISTS IN ONE STATE IT WAS FOUND THAT 30 PERCENT OF REGISTERED VOTERS WERE ACTUALLY DECEASED. HIS SEPTEMBER POLL SHOWS THAT A PLURALITY (47 PERCENT) OF HIS SAMPLE HAS LITTLE OR NO CONFIDENCE IN THE CNE. THERE IS MUCH MORE CONFIDENCE IN THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN THE ELECTION PROCESS (ONLY 29 PERCENT LACK CONFIDENCE IN THE MILITARY'S ROLE.) [REDACTED]

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CONCLUSION

11. (C) [REDACTED] IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE VIABILITY OF AD PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LUIS ALFARO. WHILE HE RECOGNIZES THAT

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ALFARO'S CANDIDACY MIGHT DENY CHAVEZ POTENTIAL VOTERS, HE IS NEVERTHELESS CONCERNED THAT A CONCERTED EFFORT BY ALFARO COULD DRAIN VOTES AWAY FROM SALAS ROMER, OPENING THE DOOR FOR A CHAVEZ VICTORY. WHILE [REDACTED] DOES NOT TRUST CHAVEZ'S DEMOCRATIC BON FIDES, HE HAS ARGUED STRENUOUSLY WITHIN AD THAT THE PARTY MUST BE PREPARED TO HELP THE NEXT GOVERNMENT--NO MATTER WHO WINS--TO GOVERN DEMOCRATICALLY. IN THIS REGARD, [REDACTED] EXPRESSES ELOQUENTLY A COMMON AD THEME: AD IS THE ONLY POLITICAL PARTY LEFT IN VENEZUELA, AND IS CRUCIAL TO THE STABILITY AND GOVERNABILITY OF VENEZUELA. IN OTHER WORDS, [REDACTED] BELIEVES THAT AD WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF THIS COUNTRY, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE RESULTS OF THE DECEMBER 6 ELECTIONS.

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